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Thai cops hunting for ex-Green Beret

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Bangkok (UPI)—Thai police staked out the Laotian border yesterday in a bid to capture a former Green Beret officer who slipped into Laos on a secret expedition to search for American prisoners of war, authorities said.

Lt. Col. James (Bo) Gritz said in a message from deep in the Laotian jungle that he has evidence—he called it PW “ID”—of American prisoners of war and will continue to search until he finds more information, the Los Angeles Times reported.

In a 12-page handwritten letter sent to the newspaper's Bangkok bureau, Gritz said that a second of his Laotian guerrilla allies had been killed. The first death was said to have occurred during an incursion by Gritz into Laos last November, reportedly financed in part by Hollywood actor William Shatner. Shatner maintains that the money given to Gritz was to buy Gritz' life story.

GRITZ ALSO said that United States government intelligence agencies were aware of his plans, an assertion denied by the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Thai Foreign Ministry spokesman Jetr Sucharitkui said that his government was opposed to the mission and that Gritz and any other participants who cross the Mekong River into Thailand would face charges of illegal entry and illegal possession of firearms. But Gritz told the Times he will press his search until he can tell

the nation whether any Americans are being held in Laos.

Gritz, a Vietnam veteran from Westchester, Calif., disclosed his location in the letter, dated Feb. 23 and brought from Laos by runner, the Times said. Delivered Saturday, it was signed by Gritz and two other Americans, David Scott Weekly, a Navy veteran from Encinitas, Calif., whose expertise in weaponry earned him the nickname “Dr. Death,” and Gary Goldman, 38, a soldier of fortune from Los Angeles who is trained in anti-terrorism techniques.